THE JEWS OF ENGLAND IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY[1].

THE subject on which I am to address you is somewhat recondite and abounds in detail of a kind which, I fear, is likely to interest few but the lawyer or the antiquary; but I will endeavour to be as little technical and prolix as possible, and to present what I have to say in a manner as interesting as its nature and my powers permit. Happily, as to the source from which the documents which I have edited are derived, a word or two will amply suffice. Briefly, then, I may say that the Plea Rolls of the Exchequer of the Jews lay unnoticed for centuries. Indeed, attention was first drawn to them in 1844, when the earliest of them, 3 and 4 Hen. III (1218–19), was edited by Cole in a volume of miscellaneous "Documents" published by the Record Commission. Nothing further was done upon them until 1887, when Dr. Gross embodied the results of a partial survey of the field in an admirable paper read on occasion of the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition. During my own researches four new rolls and a fragment have been brought to light, which, added to the forty-seven rolls previously catalogued, make fifty-one rolls, one membrane in all.

During the reign of Henry III there are several large gaps in the series, which on the other hand is practically continuous from the first to the fourteenth year of Edward I (1286). It is extremely provoking that the rolls of the four years immediately preceding the closure of the Court

[1] Read before the Jewish Historical Society of England, April, 1902.

should be missing; but there is always hope in the Record Office, and it is therefore still possible that they, or some of them, may eventually be discovered. The rolls are written in the court-hand of the period, a peculiar kind of shorthand; and the system of abbreviation is carried out with more vigour and less rigour than perhaps in any other documents, which makes their continuous perusal extremely trying to the sight. For the purpose of my book I went through the rolls twice, and I believe that I omitted few, if any, pleas of capital importance. The documents interspersed between the pleas I selected with the view of illustrating, as far as possible, the history of the Jewry, particularly in its relations with the Crown and the Baronage; and, though here, owing to the multiplicity of these documents, I am bound to speak with caution, I may fairly say that I am inclined to doubt whether much of general historical interest remains inedited. It is, of eourse, from the insight which they afford into the causes which brought about one of the crises in the vicissitudinous history of the Jewish people that these ancient documents derive their principal value. They enable us to appreciate with an accuracy, which would otherwise be impossible, the place occupied by the Jews in the social and political life of the period, and thus serve to amplify and elucidate the fragmentary evidence derived from other archives and the meagre information vouchsafed by the chroniclers.

The period under review is that in which feudalism took definite and final shape, a consummation which could not fail to affect most vitally the fortunes of a people which represented an anterior and markedly dissimilar civilization and order of ideas.

A militant confraternity bound together in the relation of superior and inferior and rigorously exclusive of all who cannot or will not submit to its yoke—such is the essential idea represented by the term feudalism, or the feudal system. It has passed away, and only a few experts

are now familiar with the details of its punctiliously ordered aristocratic *régime*; but it must not be forgotten that with all its rigidity and harshness, its barbarity and brutality, it was right in its time and place. Indeed the northern nations, when they began seriously to grapple with the gigantic task of reorganizing the shattered Roman Empire, could not but have thrown their polity into such a shape, fortifying it at every turn by the highest sanction they knew, the oath by God and the holy Gospels. Had they remained pagan, or had Arianism triumphed and developed into an abstract monotheism like that of Mohammed, they would still have found it necessary to confirm their solemn engagements by oaths. Sacramental tenure, tenure by oath of fealty, would still have been regarded as the only tenure truly worthy of a free man; and military service as the most honourable of all service. The organization of society would thus have been essentially feudal. The tenant would still have sworn his fealty (with or without homage, according as the tenure was or was not military), and thus have become bound to his lord in the relation of vassal to superior, bound, that is to say, to render him certain services, which faithfully performed he was secure in his holding for life, while on his death custom dictated at first by convenience, but gradually acquiring the force of law, would have secured the succession to his next heir. Thus it was not so much religion as the feudal idea itself which excluded the Jew from feudal society, the oath of fealty being merely one of the forms in which that idea embodied itself. However, as the Jew could not conscientiously take it, he could not enter the confraternity, and therefore he could not, broadly speaking, hold an estate of freehold in land. True it is that Henry II granted to Isaac, son of Rabbi Joce and his sons, the manor of Ham, in Essex, to which Isaac by purchase from Earl Ferrars added the neighbouring manor of Thurrock, which his son Joce inherited and eventually sold to Henry de Gray (1199). Isaac, son of

Rabbi Joce, also held in 1166 a half-knight's fee of the Earl of Hertford[1]. But these are the only examples which I have been able to discover of the apparent admission of Jews into the English feudal system; and I do not profess to be able to explain them. I can only suggest that Isaac and his sons were high in favour with Henry II, and were in consequence permitted to swear their fealty on the Pentateuch, a concession which was never again made.

As creditors, Jews did from time to time hold not a few English manors by way of security for loans; but this merely meant that they were entitled to take the rents and profits; and as there was then neither action of foreclosure nor Statute of Limitation, they were always liable to be called to account; so that their tenure was not of a kind to ripen by lapse of time into feudal tenure. Excluded thus from the feudal system, and yet dispersed throughout feudal society in communities which possessed great wealth and little means of defending it, the Jews could not but suffer severely and even terribly by the mere, and as it were, mechanical evolution of events.

Some of you, doubtless, know some or one or other of the passes which lead from Switzerland into Italy; and those who do so, can hardly fail to have observed a feature of the landscape which is an apt illustration, as it were a symbol and epitome, of much of the social history of the Middle Ages,—I mean the castles, like that of the Stockalper on the Simplon road or that of the Trivulzi within the San Bernardino, which were evidently built for the purpose of enabling the holders to take toll of the merchants and other travellers who fared to and fro by these passes. Love, war, and the chase were, we know, the main preoccupations of the mediaeval knight; but there was also a more prosaic side to his life, for he like common mortals, had to provide himself with ways

[1] Rymer, *Foedera*, ed. Clark, i. 51. *Rot. Cart.* p. 6. *Lib. Rub. de Scacc.* (Rolls Ser.), p. 410.

and means, and, as he was averse to sordid methods, he did so in a free, independent and aristocratic manner, by levying toll wheresoever and on whomsoever toll was leviable. Probably, no doubt of his right ever crossed his mind; for he was but following the natural bent of a predatory race, which deemed it more honourable to take than to make. Thus on every stranger who craved passage through a feudal lord's territory lay the burden of showing cause why he should not be held to ransom; and the ransom was, of course, proportioned to the wealth of the contributory, a burgher with a well-lined purse, and a long train of richly laden sumpter-mules, being regarded as a veritable Godsend, and treated accordingly. No doubt, even in those days, vague ideas of international comity, religion and humanity counted for something, but nevertheless wherever feudal ideas took deep root and prevailed, the risks to which foreign traders were exposed were extreme; and a race which could claim the benefit of no international comity, and lay outside the pale of the Catholic Church, was delivered over as a prey to the spoiler with no other mitigation of its harsh destiny than his satiety or caprice might dictate.

Nevertheless, on the continent of Europe, the Jews continued to be engaged in trade until the thirteenth century, and in the South, where feudalism took on the whole far less hold than in the North, until a much later date. In England, on the other hand, any trade which they carried on must have been illicit until late in the thirteenth century.

A charter of King John, which cites charters of his father and his father's grandfather[1], expressly authorizes Jews "to receive and buy all things brought to them" with certain exceptions. Observe that the clause does not authorize the Jews to sell anything, but concedes them the right of receiving and purchasing. It is evident, there-

[1] The charter of Henry I is not mentioned as such, but it is unmistakably implied.

fore, that by the common law they had not what lawyers call the *jus commercii*, they had not the elementary right of barter, they were completely cut off from the rest of the community, and nothing less than a royal charter was necessary to enable them to receive and buy what was offered them. This disability was due to the system of gilds which was, so to speak, feudalism applied to trade; and hence when the right of free competition was eventually conceded to the Jews by the statute of 3 Ed. I, 1274–5, the concession proved illusory.

In respect of the crafts, a similar distinction is observable between England and the Continent. Throughout the period under review, the continental Jews seem to have been engaged in not a few important handicrafts. In England there is evidence of the lucrative exercise by them of the craft of the goldsmith; and medicine was open to them. One Joseph Medicus, who was doubtless a Jew, is mentioned in a roll of 1 Rich. I (Great Roll of the Pipe, 1 Rich. I, 1189–90, p. 18). I see, however, no reason to suppose that the English Jews of this period got their living in any considerable numbers either as goldsmiths or as physicians, or in any other art or craft. It is therefore probable that the capital with which the community started in the country was very considerable. As for the means by which it was afterwards developed, they appear very plainly from the records. The charter to which I have referred assumes that their principal occupation was that of money-lenders. It expressly authorizes them to hold "all that they now rightfully hold in lands, fees, gages and purchases," and it grants them certain forensic privileges. Thus they were entitled to give their testimony on the Pentateuch, to be tried by their peers, to purge themselves by their bare oath in cases where Christians were still required to produce compurgators, and while by one clause they, in common with Christians, were required as plaintiffs to support their claim by the oath of two witnesses, another clause allowed the mere writ

in their hands to count as evidence, a privilege not extended to Christians. The charter did not regulate interest in any way, but by Magna Carta its accruer was suspended during the minority of an heir; and during the first half of the thirteenth century 2*d.* a pound a week, or 43⅓ per cent. came to be recognized as the legal maximum.

The scope of the charter is evident. The Crown was in need of a bank on which it could draw with perfect security, that, as long as there was any wealth left in the country, its drafts would be honoured. And this construction is confirmed, if confirmation be necessary, by the words of an ancient statute which expressly enacts that "Jews and all their effects are the King's property, and if any man withhold their money from them, let the King recover it as his own." For this reason the charter exempted the Jews from the ordinary taxation, not because the Crown had any tenderness for them, but simply because it was not to the interest of the Crown to tax its own property.

In short, in England the Crown at a very early date perceived the expediency of rescuing the Jews from the tyranny of the Baronage, and monopolizing the right of holding them to ransom; and the subsequent history of the unfortunate people is little else than a record of ruthless exactions on the part of the Crown and violent outbreaks on the part of the Baronage and the people, who saw in the Jews only minions of the Crown who grew rich at their expense, until the abolition of usury by Edward I left them practically without lawful means of subsistence, and entailed as its inevitable sequel their expulsion from the country in 1290. In truth, a melancholy story, few stories perhaps more so than this which is enshrined in the time-worn, worm-eaten, sometimes hardly decipherable records of the Exchequer of the Jews.

It is, as I have said, my purpose as far as possible to spare you dry details and tedious disquisitions touching matters which can interest only those whose business it is

to trace the origin and development of our legal institutions. I will therefore say briefly, that this Exchequer of the Jews first emerges as a distinct branch of the Great Exchequer towards the close of the reign of Richard I, when the fierce anti-Semitism of the Baronage and populace, evinced by a course of outrage beginning with the coronation and culminating in the massacre of some hundreds of Jews at York in 1190, induced the Crown to take measures for the more effectual protection, if not of the persons at any rate of the property and credit of the Jews. In 1194 it was provided that all bonds given by Christians to Jews should thenceforth be registered by the deposit of a memorial or duplicate in Archae established for the purpose in certain towns of Jewry; the chirographers who were charged with the drafting of the bonds and duplicates, as well as with the custody of the latter, being four in number, two Christians and two Jews[1]. Nothing was enacted concerning the Jews' starrs, or acquittances, but it soon, at any rate, became the rule to enroll these documents in court, and it was held that an unenrolled acquittance was null and void, while an unregistered bond was void in the hands of the Jew but valid in the hand of the Crown. The Archae were, of course, open at all times to inspection by the officers of the Crown, and could be closed at any moment by order of the Crown; and they were periodically so closed, whenever it was expedient for the Crown to make a scrutiny of their contents for the purpose, so to speak, of feeling the financial pulse of the Jews by way of preliminary to a talliage.

The right of talliaging the Jews, i.e. of excising a portion of their substance, seems to have been of immemorial antiquity. In the very earliest record of the Exchequer which we possess, the Pipe Bill of the reign of Henry I, occur the names of various Jews as contributories to the royal revenue. We have, however, no evidence of the levy of any collective talliage upon them until

[1] Hoveden (Rolls Ser.), iii. 266.

the year 1168, and then the sum does not exceed 5,000 marks. It is, therefore, very surprising to find that only twenty years later no less a sum than £60,000 was raised from the community for the purpose of the Crusade. Doubtless the discovery thus made of the height to which their opulence had grown, had much to do with the outbreak of anti-Semitism which followed, and which in its turn led, as we have seen, to the establishment of the Archae, which again was closely followed by the establishment within the Exchequer of a special department for the cognizance of causes between Christians and Jews, the supervision of the Archae and the enforcement of the claim of the Crown to talliage or other exactions against the Jews. With cases between Jews and Jews the Jewish Exchequer did not concern itself, with the exception of Pleas of the Crown (homicide, mayhem, deliberate assault, housebreaking, rape, larceny, arson, and treasure trove), in which cases a jury composed exclusively of Jews was sworn. All other cases between Jew and Jew were left to the cognizance of the Jewish tribunals. In cases between Christians and Jews a mixed jury was sworn; and among the earliest justices of the court two were Jews; from which it would seem that the first intention was that the bench as well as the jury should be mixed. This intention was, however, completely abandoned. These two early Jewish justices were the last as well as the first of their race that held judicial office in the Exchequer of the Jews. On the other hand, the Chief Rabbi—I use the term for the sake of convenience, leaving the question of its precise significance to be determined by those who are better qualified to decide such a matter—an officer who held directly and for life of the Crown, and was evidently regarded as the highest authority on questions of Jewish law and usage, sat as assessor to the justices, and had the custody of certain rolls, though what precisely they were we cannot say. Certain also of the subordinate offices were held for a time by Jews: otherwise the staff

of the Court was entirely Christian. The Court ousted the ordinary jurisdiction of the King's Court at Westminster, the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, and all local jurisdictions except those of the sheriff and the wardens or constables of royal castles; and it came gradually to oust the ordinary jurisdiction of the justices in eyre. On the other hand, its jurisdiction was always liable to be superseded by a special commission. After the establishment of this Court, which dates from 1198, the work of talliaging and otherwise mulcting the Jewish community went forward in a very systematic and business-like way.

John raised 4,000 marks from the Jewry as the price of his charter in 1201, and another 4,000 marks a few years later. In 1210, being then in extreme pecuniary straits, he laid the entire community under arrest, and contrived by the most brutal methods to wring from it no less a sum than 66,000 marks. At the same time he seems to have expelled from the kingdom all Jews who could not pay a minimum rate of talliage; and many others went into voluntary exile, from which they did not return until the accession of Henry III. Measures were then taken to encourage their resettlement in the country; they were publicly assured of the King's firm peace, and in certain towns burgesses were sworn to protect them from popular violence; at the same time the men were required to wear a badge, probably to facilitate their recognition by their protectors, and gradually, in breach of their charter, which in other respects was on the whole observed, they were restricted to certain localities. These provisions were, of course, intended to secure the payment of talliage, which was now exacted with less of violence and more of system than in previous reigns. Certain prominent Jews were made responsible for the required amount, which they were authorized to raise by distraint. At the same time they were flattered and caressed in various ways by the Crown, the object being to found

a court faction or, at any rate, interest within the Jewry. The pecuniary straits, to which political jars reduced the King, compelled him to raise his revenue by unconstitutional methods. The Jews early felt the pinch, which became more and more severe as the tension between the King and the baronial party increased. Thus, whereas during the first thirteen years of Henry III's reign, 10,000 marks was the total amount laid upon the Jewry, the talliage for the next decade 1230–40 rose to 18,000 marks, while during the decade 1240–50 it reached the immense total of 80,000 marks. In 1253 a tax of a third was laid upon the community, and the anti-Semitic canons of the Council of Oxford (1222) were revived and reinforced by a royal edict, which was evidently issued with the intention of putting pressure upon the Jewry. The edict threatened with banishment all Jews or Jewesses who did not "serve" the King in some way, proscribed all synagogues built on sites not dedicated to the purpose in the time of King John, and enjoined the worshippers to subdue their voices. At the same time it rendered the Jewish householder liable for parish dues, and forbade him to entertain Christians in any capacity. It further imposed the duty of fasting during Lent upon all Jews and Jewesses, required all male Jews to wear their badges conspicuously, forbade them to enter any church or chapel except for purposes of transit, and to publicly discuss the Christian religion or hinder the work of conversion. Finally it excluded them from all towns except the recognized towns of Jewry, unless they first obtained a special licence from the Crown. There can be no reasonable doubt that this edict was simply intended to harass a community which was in bad odour with the King, because it no longer responded with due elasticity to his pecuniary demands; and this construction is abundantly corroborated by the sequel.

In 1254, Henry being then abroad, a talliage of 10,000 marks was laid upon the community by the Regent, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, the King's brother, and a far

harder man than he. The demand was resisted with great spirit by the Chief Rabbi Elias, son of Master Moses, who accepted for himself and his people the banishment threatened by the edict as a lesser evil than continuance in the country on such terms. All in vain, however: the safe-conduct which he craved was refused, and means were found to extort, if not the whole, at any rate a considerable fraction of the required sum. In the following year (1255) the King's demand of an aid of 8,000 marks was met with a peremptory refusal; but still there is no word of banishment; on the contrary, Earl Richard comes to his brother's aid with an advance of 5,000 marks and takes by way of security an assignment of the entire Jewry with all its arrears of talliage. Earl Richard was, as I have said, a hard man; he was also as ambitious as he was hard; he aspired to sway the destinies of the Holy Roman Empire, and, though he eventually failed of his object, he did succeed in carrying his election as King of Romans by corruption. The election took place while the Jewry was in his hand; and it is presumable that he more than realized the amount of his advance. At any rate, the Jews appear to have been so impoverished by his operations that I find no evidence of any considerable contribution made by them to the royal treasury until after the conclusion of the civil war. Shortly before the outbreak of hostilities (July, 1262) they were assigned to Prince Edward, who subdemised them to a firm of Cahorsin usurers; but I have not been able to discover the precise nature or financial result of this transaction.

During the war, and especially after the battle of Lewes, (May 14, 1264), they felt the full force of the ruthless anti-Semitism of the baronial party. A raid upon an Archa was an ordinary incident in the campaign; the bonds, which it was now the rule to retain in lieu of the memorial, were impounded or burned; and Montfort during the brief period of his ascendency annulled them all by proclamation. Several of the most populous Jewries were also sacked,

and multitudes of Jews were massacred. The restoration of peace was followed at no great interval by measures invalidating the rent-charges in which the Jews had to a large extent invested their money, prohibiting the assignment of their debts without royal licence, and the assignment of interest in any event, and providing for the redemption of all freehold estates in land which they had or might thereafter have in their possession. This policy was carried still further by Edward I, who abolished legal remedies for the recovery of interest, and limited execution for the principal money to a moiety of the debtor's lands and chattels[1]. The statute was partially evaded by the Jews, who, being now authorized to trade, frequently veiled usurious transactions under the form of common contracts. They were held mainly responsible for a most disastrous defacement of the coinage which followed hard on the passing of this measure.

In 1278 the whole community was laid under arrest, and in the following year 293 Jews were hanged for coin-clipping. I am sorry to say that after much painful research I have failed to find the record of this case, which was tried by a special commission at Guildhall. I have therefore no opinion to express as to the degree of truth there may have been in the accusation, beyond this, that there was every temptation to the Jews to commit the offence and to the Crown to aggravate their guilt. I have also failed to find the record of the proceedings which followed a subsequent arrest *en masse* of the Jewry, which took place in 1287, and resulted in its amercement in £12,000. In 1290 the whole community was banished the realm by royal edict. Once more I have to lament a lacuna in the records. The edict is not forthcoming. We are, therefore, driven to rely upon secondary evidence and conjecture for the grounds of this high-handed measure. The secondary evidence to which I refer is a writ giving certain directions, which need not be detailed, to the

[1] *Statutes of the Realm*, I, 221.

Justices of the Exchequer of the Jews as to the winding-up of the business of the Court. The sole ground of the expulsion assigned in the preamble is the evasion by the Jews of the usury law. There is no reason to doubt that this was, at any rate, one of the reasons by which the King was actuated; but a full declaration of his policy was hardly to be expected in a writ of this kind, and we may therefore reasonably call conjecture to our aid for its fuller determination. In the first place then, we may ask, how far is religion likely to have entered into it? After considering the matter as carefully as I can, I am disposed to think that the religious factor was probably inappreciable. In the first place Judaism is not, properly speaking, a heresy; for the Catholic Church has never claimed jurisdiction to correct what she deems misbelief in any but Christians. It is true that from time to time baptism has been administered at the sword's point; but nevertheless the practice has always been condemned by the authoritative teaching of the Church. It is true also that she would feel herself justified in restraining those outside her pale from disseminating what she deemed heresy among her own children; but the expulsion from her midst of all who are not of her has never been part of her policy; and hence in Italy the Jews were throughout the Middle Ages not only tolerated, but far better treated than in any other European country. Moreover, the clergy of England during the period under review had, on the whole, evinced far less hostility to the Jews than the laity; and though towards its close they had somewhat changed their attitude, procuring the aid of the State to force the Gospel upon the attention of the Jews, and severely restrict the exercise by them of their own religion, yet it would seem that their zeal soon flagged, and that even an animated appeal on the part of Pope Honorius IV failed to revive it. For these reasons I incline to think that religion had little or nothing to do with the expulsion.

On the other hand, the mere evasion of the usury law can hardly have been the sole or the chief cause which dictated the policy. It would certainly have been possible to devise regulations by which that practice might have been to a very considerable extent abated; and it would seem that an alternative policy, the allowance of interest at a fixed rate for a limited term, was for a time contemplated. It has hitherto been assumed, I hardly know why, that this measure, which exists only in the form of an undated draft, was actually passed into law. My scrutiny of the rolls has, however, convinced me that this was certainly not the case before the year 1286 when they come to an end, just four years before the expulsion. Not only is there no evidence upon the rolls of the existence of any such measure, but cases occur in abundance, in which, if it had been passed, it would certainly have been put in force. For example, one of its provisions authorized the empanelling of a jury composed exclusively of Christians in cases where, as occasionally happened, the mixed jury was equally divided: but there is no trace upon the rolls of recourse to this expedient, except during the first few years of Edward's reign, when it was impossible that the measure should be in force. The measure, therefore, can have been operative, if at all, only during the four years immediately preceding the expulsion; but after a careful scrutiny of all the records known to me in which trace of its existence might be found, I have failed to discover any such trace. For these reasons I think we may conclude that it remained a mere project, and that the policy of amending the usury law was never so much as tried. We are, therefore, thrown back upon that law itself as the ground of the expulsion; and when account is taken of all its provisions, it will, I think, be manifest that the expulsion was its inevitable sequel.

The evident policy of the measure was to convert the Jews out of hand into agriculturists and traders. They were authorized to take farms, but at the same time it

was provided, that, if they failed to do so within fifteen years, the licence should be withdrawn. They were also authorized to trade, but the measure contained no provision, as probably none could have been enforced, for opening the gilds to them. It was, of course, absurd to expect the Jews in any large numbers to take to agricultural pursuits within so brief a period as fifteen years; nor was there any chance of their competing successfully in commerce with the gildsmen. The measure therefore failed, and its failure being apparent, Edward at the close of the prescribed period of fifteen years cut the Gordian knot by expelling a community which he regarded as an element not to be assimilated by the body politic, a cause of irritation to his people and of embarrassment to himself.

The measure was of Rhadamanthine sternness, but in order to judge it fairly the whole complex of circumstances with which Edward had to deal must be taken into account. He would have been powerless to change the temper, traditions, and ideas of his own people, had he been as philo-Semitic as he was probably the reverse. He had inherited from his ancestors the idea that the Jews were his property, to deal with exactly as he chose. They had taken no oath of fealty to him, and were therefore not his liege subjects. In his view, as in the view of his predecessors, they held their position in the country entirely at his good will and pleasure: all that they possessed was his, and could be rightfully reclaimed at any moment. So far had this principle been carried that besides the regular levy of talliage there was hardly an event of importance in the life of a Jew of which the Crown did not take advantage to levy toll upon him. The Court, which was his aegis against the rapacity of the barons and the fury of the populace, mulcted him in exorbitant fees before it would do him the most elementary justice; when he died his whole estate passed into the King's hand, and the lawyers exerted all their ingenuity to show cause why

it should remain there; in any case it was not liberated until a third had been excised from it to the use of the Crown; if he left infant children they were wards of the Crown, and therefore could not marry without royal licence, which, of course, was not ordinarily granted without a handsome consideration. A royal licence was also required whenever a Jew changed his residence, though it was but from one town of Jewry to another. Finally the Crown visited excommunication by the Synagogue, or conversion to Christianity, with forfeiture of the offender's estate, and only under Edward himself abated some of its rigour in the case of converts. Such being the recognized status of the Jews, it would have been nothing less than a moral miracle if Edward had felt himself bound to strain a point in their favour, and it would be absurd to find fault with him for dismissing them from the country as soon as he deemed their presence no longer desirable. Nay, it is even probable that the expulsion was a blessing in disguise. There is no reason to suppose, that, had he retained them in the country, their lot would have improved. They had not, as I have intimated, shown much capacity for craftsmanship at a time when the crafts were still free from the shackles of the gild system. These shackles were now being forged. In the fourteenth century they would have found it as difficult to hold their own in the crafts as in commerce; and even had the usury law been repealed or allowed to fall into abeyance, they would have found the Italians formidable competitors in the money-market. There is no reason to suppose that time would have wrought any speedy and material mitigation of the aversion with which they were regarded by the nobles and people, and their sufferings during the Barons' Wars were probably trifling in comparison with what would have been in store for them during the Wars of the Roses. From the Tudors they had at the least no better treatment to expect than from the Plantagenets. The traditions of the Tudors would have been continued

by the Stuarts; and in short, until the final collapse of the feudal *régime* in the seventeenth century, it was hardly possible that the lot of the Jews in England should have been other than one of extreme humiliation, varied only by periodical outbreaks of savage oppression.

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